

Application No. 09/476,877
Reply to Office Action of January 4, 2006

Docket No.: 21736-00010-US

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Listing of the Claims:

Claims 1-86 (canceled)

87. (currently amended) A computer-implemented system for ~~auetioning~~ conducting an auction of a plurality of items, at least some of said items being dissimilar, said system comprising:

- a) an auctioneer's system and at least two user systems, the auctioneer's system communicatively coupled to user systems;
- b) said user systems including:
 - b1) means for receiving messages from the auctioneer's system and for displaying ~~these~~ said messages;
 - b2) means for receiving bid related information from users; and
 - b3) means for transmitting bid information to the auctioneer's system, said bid information including bids (S_i, P_i) each comprising a set identification S_i and a value parameter P_i , where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that ~~the~~ a user proposes to transact and where the value parameter P_i specifies a value proposed by the user for the set of items identified by S_i , at least one of the bids including a set identification S_i identifying at least two different items; and
- c) said auctioneer's system including:
 - c1) means for generating and transmitting messages to at least one of said user systems, said messages including a non-final message indicating that ~~an~~ the auction will continue and a final message indicating that ~~an~~ the auction has terminated;
 - c2) means for receiving bid information from at least one of said user systems; and
 - c3) decision means responsive to the bid information received from the user systems for determining whether ~~an~~ the auction should continue or terminate, said decision means including:

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c31) selecting means which selects bids to maximize a function of the value parameters P_i of the selected bids;

c32) means to initiate the generation of a non-final message to at least one user system in response to a determination to continue ~~an~~ the auction; and

c33) means to initiate the generation of a final message to at least one user system in response to a determination to terminate ~~an~~ the auction.

88. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 87 wherein the selecting means constrains the selection such that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are disjoint.

89. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 88 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

90. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 88 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds.

91. (currently amended) A system as recited in claim 90 wherein the decision means compares ~~the a~~ a sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids to a function of ~~the a~~ a sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids of an earlier round.

92. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 88 which further includes means for limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.

93. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 88 which further includes means for limiting the number of bids that may be entered by a particular user.

94. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 88 which further includes means for limiting bids to identifying particular sets of said plurality of items.

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95. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 88 which further includes means for limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no less than a minimum value, wherein said minimum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

96. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 88 which further includes means for limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no greater than a maximum value, wherein said maximum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

97. (currently amended) A computer-implemented system for ~~auctioning~~ conducting an auction of dissimilar items, including multiple instances of each of plural dissimilar items, said system comprising:

- a) an auctioneer's system and at least two user systems, the auctioneer's system communicatively coupled to user systems;
- b) said user systems including:
 - b1) means for receiving messages from the auctioneer's system and for displaying ~~these~~ said messages;
 - b2) means for receiving bid related information from users; and
 - b3) means for transmitting bid information to the auctioneer's system, said bid information including bids (S_i, P_i) each comprising a set identification S_i and a value parameter P_i , where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that ~~the~~ a user proposes to transact and where the value parameter P_i specifies a value proposed by the user for ~~the~~ a set of items identified by S_i , at least one of the bids including a set identification S_i identifying at least two different items; and
- c) said auctioneer's system including:
 - c1) means for generating and transmitting messages to at least one of said user systems, said messages including a non-final message indicating that ~~an~~ the auction will continue and a final message indicating that ~~an~~ the auction has terminated;

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c2) means for receiving bid information from at least one of said user systems;
and

c3) decision means responsive to the bid information received from the user systems for determining whether ~~an~~ the auction should continue or terminate, said decision means including:

c31) selecting means which selects bids to maximize a function of the value parameters P_i of the selected bids subject to ~~the~~ a constraint that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are compatible;

c32) means to initiate the generation of a non-final message to at least one user system in response to a determination to continue ~~an~~ the auction; and

c33) means to initiate the generation of a final message to at least one user system in response to a determination to terminate ~~an~~ the auction.

98. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 97 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

99. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 97 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds.

100. (currently amended) A system as recited in claim 99 wherein the sets S_i identified by the selected bids in ~~the~~ a final round of the auction indicate items that will be assigned to the respective users after the auction.

101. (currently amended) A system as recited in claim 99 wherein the decision means compares ~~the~~ a sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids to a function of ~~the~~ a sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids of an earlier round.

102. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 97 which further includes means for limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.

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103. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 97 which further includes means for limiting the number of bids that may be entered by a particular user.

104. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 97 which further includes means for limiting bids to identifying particular sets of said plurality of items.

105. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 97 which further includes means for limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no less than a minimum value, wherein said minimum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

106. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 97 which further includes means for limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no greater than a maximum value, wherein said maximum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

107. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for ~~auetioning~~ conducting an auction of a plurality of items among a plurality of users, at least some of said items being dissimilar, the method comprising:

a) receiving bid related information from users ~~at a computer~~ and transmitting bid information for processing by a computer, said bid information including bids (S_i, P_i) each comprising a set identification S_i and a value parameter P_i , where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that ~~the a~~ user proposes to transact and where the value parameter P_i specifies a value proposed by the user for the set of items identified by S_i , at least one of the bids including a set identification S_i identifying at least two different items;

b) determining at a said computer, in response to the bid information, whether the auction should continue or terminate, said determining including ~~the selecting of~~ bids to maximize a function of the value parameters P_i of the selected bids;

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- c) transmitting a message ~~from a computer~~ indicating that the auction will continue to at least one user, in response to a determination to continue the auction; and
- d) transmitting a message ~~from a computer~~ indicating that the auction will terminate to at least one user, in response to a determination to terminate the auction.

108. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 107 wherein the determining further includes constraining the selection such that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are disjoint.

109. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 108 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

110. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 108 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds.

111. (Currently amended) A method as recited in claim 110 wherein the determining further includes comparing ~~the a~~ sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids to a function of ~~the a~~ sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids of an earlier round.

112. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 108 which further comprises limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.

113. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 108 which further comprises limiting the number of bids that may be entered by a particular user.

114. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 108 which further comprises limiting bids to identifying particular sets of said plurality of items.

115. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 108 which further comprises limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no less than a minimum value, wherein

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said minimum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

116. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 108 which further comprises limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no greater than a maximum value, wherein said maximum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

117. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for ~~auctioning~~ conducting an auction of a plurality of items among a plurality of users, at least some of said items being dissimilar, the method comprising:

- a) receiving bid related information from users ~~at a computer~~ and transmitting bid information for processing by a computer, said bid information including bids (S_i, P_i) each comprising a set identification S_i and a value parameter P_i , where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that ~~the a~~ user proposes to transact and where the value parameter P_i specifies a value proposed by the user for the set of items identified by S_i , at least one of the bids including a set identification S_i identifying at least two different items;
- b) determining at a said computer, in response to the bid information, whether the auction should continue or terminate, said determining including ~~the selecting of~~ selecting bids to maximize a function of the value parameters P_i of the selected bids subject to ~~the a~~ a constraint that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are compatible;
- c) transmitting a message ~~from a computer~~ indicating that the auction will continue to at least one user, in response to a determination to continue the auction; and
- d) transmitting a message ~~from a computer~~ indicating that the auction will terminate to at least one user, in response to a determination to terminate the auction.

118. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 117 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

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119. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 117 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds.

120. (currently amended) A method as recited in claim 119 wherein the sets S_i identified by the selected bids in the a final round of the auction indicate items that will be assigned to the respective users after the auction.

121. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 119 wherein the determining further includes comparing the sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids to a function of the sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids of an earlier round.

122. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 117 which further comprises limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.

123. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 117 which further comprises limiting the number of bids that may be entered by a particular user.

124. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 117 which further comprises limiting bids to identifying particular sets of said plurality of items.

125. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 117 which further comprises limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no less than a minimum value, wherein said minimum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

126. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 117 which further comprises limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no greater than a maximum value, wherein said maximum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

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127. (Currently amended) A system for conducting a computer-implemented auction of a plurality of items among a plurality of users, at least some of said items being dissimilar, said system comprising:

- a) means for receiving bid information, said bid information including bids (S_i, P_i) each comprising a set identification S_i and a value parameter P_i , where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that the i user proposes to transact and where the value parameter P_i specifies a value proposed by the user for the set of items identified by S_i , at least one of the bids including a set identification S_i identifying at least two different items;
- b) means for transmitting signals based on the bid information for processing by a computer; and
- c) means at a said computer for determining, based on the signals, the items to be assigned to the users, said determining means including selecting means which selects bids to maximize a function of the value parameters P_i of the selected bids.

128. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 127 wherein the selecting means constrains the selection such that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are disjoint.

129. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 128 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

130. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 128 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds.

131. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 130 wherein the determining means compares the sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids to a function of the sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids of an earlier round.

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132. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 128 which further includes means for limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.

133. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 128 which further includes means for limiting the number of bids that may be entered by a particular user.

134. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 128 which further includes means for limiting bids to identifying particular sets of said plurality of items.

135. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 128 which further includes means for limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no less than a minimum value, wherein said minimum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

136. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 128 which further includes means for limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no greater than a maximum value, wherein said maximum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

137. (currently amended) A system for conducting a computer-implemented auction of dissimilar items, including multiple instances of each of plural dissimilar items, among a plurality of users, said system comprising:

- a) means for receiving bid information, said bid information including bids (S_i, P_i) each comprising a set identification S_i and a value parameter P_i , where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that ~~the a~~ user proposes to transact and where the value parameter P_i specifies a value proposed by the user for the set of items identified by S_i , at least one of the bids including a set identification S_i identifying at least two different items;
- b) means for transmitting signals based on the bid information for processing by a computer; and

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c) means at a said computer for determining, based on the signals, the items to be assigned to the users, said determining means including selecting means which selects bids to maximize a function of the value parameters P_i of the selected bids subject to ~~the~~ a constraint that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are compatible.

138. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 137 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

139. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 137 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds.

140. (Currently amended) A system as recited in claim 139 wherein the sets S_i identified by the selected bids in ~~the~~ a final round of the auction indicate items that will be assigned to ~~the~~ respective users after the auction.

141. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 139 wherein the determining means compares the sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids to a function of the sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids of an earlier round.

142. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 137 which further includes means for limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.

143. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 137 which further includes means for limiting the number of bids that may be entered by a particular user.

144. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 137 which further includes means for limiting bids to identifying particular sets of said plurality of items.

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145. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 137 which further includes means for limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no less than a minimum value, wherein said minimum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

146. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 137 which further includes means for limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no greater than a maximum value, wherein said maximum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

147. (currently amended) A method for conducting a computer-implemented auction of a plurality of items among a plurality of users, at least some of said items being dissimilar, in a system including an auctioneer's system, the method comprising:

- a) receiving bid information from at least one of said users, said bid information including one or more bids (S_i, P_i) , each bid comprising a set identification S_i and a value parameter P_i , where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that ~~the~~ a user proposes to transact and where the value parameter P_i specifies a value proposed by the user for the set of items identified by S_i , at least one of the bids including a set identification S_i identifying at least two different items;
- b) transmitting signals based on the bid information to a computer; and
- c) determining at a said computer, based on the signals, the items to be assigned to the users, said determining including ~~the~~ selecting of bids to maximize a function of the value parameters P_i of the selected bids.

148. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 147 wherein the determining further includes constraining the selection such that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are disjoint.

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149. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 148 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

150. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 148 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds.

151. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 150 wherein the determining further includes comparing the sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids to a function of the sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids of an earlier round.

152. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 148 which further comprises limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.

153. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 148 which further comprises limiting the number of bids that may be entered by a particular user.

154. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 148 which further comprises limiting bids to identifying particular sets of said plurality of items.

155. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 148 which further comprises limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no less than a minimum value, wherein said minimum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

156. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 148 which further comprises limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no greater than a maximum value, wherein said maximum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

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157. (currently amended) A method for conducting a computer-implemented auction of dissimilar items, including multiple instances of each of plural dissimilar items, among a plurality of users, the method comprising:

- a) receiving bid information from at least one of said users, said bid information including one or more bids (S_i, P_i) , each bid comprising a set identification S_i and a value parameter P_i , where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that ~~the~~ a user proposes to transact and where the value parameter P_i specifies a value proposed by the user for the set of items identified by S_i , at least one of the bids including a set identification S_i identifying at least two different items;
- b) transmitting signals based on the bid information to a computer; and
- c) determining at a said computer, based on the signals, the items to be assigned to the users, said determining including ~~the~~ selecting of bids to maximize a function of the value parameters P_i of the selected bids subject to ~~the~~ a constraint that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are compatible.

158. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 157 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

159. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 157 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds.

160. (currently amended) A method as recited in claim 159 wherein the sets S_i identified by the selected bids in ~~the~~ a final round of the auction indicate items that will be assigned to ~~the~~ respective users after the auction.

161. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 159 wherein the determining further includes comparing the sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids to a function of the sum of the parameters P_i from the selected bids of an earlier round.

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162. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 157 which further comprises limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.

163. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 157 which further comprises limiting the number of bids that may be entered by a particular user.

164. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 157 which further comprises limiting bids to identifying particular sets of said plurality of items.

165. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 157 which further comprises limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no less than a minimum value, wherein said minimum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

166. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 157 which further comprises limiting a bid from a particular user to a value parameter no greater than a maximum value, wherein said maximum value is specific to said particular user and to a particular set identified, and depends on previous bids by the users.

167. (currently amended) A computer-implemented system for auctioning conducting an auction of a plurality of types of items among a plurality of users, a plurality of each type of item being auctioned, the system comprising:

- a) means for transmitting ~~from a computer~~ to users information including at least a current proposed price for each of the plurality of types of items;
- b) means for receiving bid related information from users ~~at a computer~~ and transmitting bid information for processing by a computer, said bid information including bids each comprising a set identification S_i where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that ~~the a~~ user proposes to transact at the current proposed prices, at least one of the bids including a set identification S_j identifying a set containing at least two different types of items;

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c) means for selecting bids to maximize a function of values of the selected bids based on the current proposed prices;

d) means for determining at a said computer, in response to the bid information, whether the auction should continue or terminate; and

e) means for transmitting a message ~~from a computer~~ to users indicating that the auction will continue in response to a determination to continue the auction, said message including an updated current proposed price for at least one of the types of items.

168. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 167 wherein the selecting means constrains the selection such that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are disjoint.

169. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 168 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

170. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 167 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds and the determining means compares the sum of the values of the selected bids with a function of the sum of the values of the selected bids of an earlier round.

171. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 167 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds and the determining means considers whether any new bids were submitted by any user in a round.

172. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 167 wherein the determining means compares the sum of bids to an amount offered.

173. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 167 which further includes means for limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.

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174. (currently amended) A computer-implemented system for ~~auctioning~~ conducting an auction of a plurality of types of items among a plurality of users, a plurality of each type of item being auctioned, the system comprising:

- a) means for transmitting ~~from a computer~~ to users information including at least a current proposed price for each of the plurality of types of items;
- b) means for receiving bid related information from users ~~at a computer~~ and transmitting bid information for processing by a computer, said bid information including bids each comprising a set identification S_i where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that ~~the a~~ user proposes to transact at the current proposed prices, at least one of the bids including a set identification S_i identifying a set containing at least two different types of items;
- c) means for selecting bids to maximize a function of values of the selected bids based on the current proposed prices subject to ~~the a~~ constraint that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are compatible;
- d) means for determining at a said computer, in response to the bid information, whether the auction should continue or terminate; and
- e) means for transmitting a message ~~from a computer~~ to users indicating that the auction will continue in response to a determination to continue the auction, said message including an updated current proposed price for at least one of the types of items.

175. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 174 wherein the selecting means constrains the selection such that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are disjoint.

176. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 175 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

177. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 174 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds and the determining means compares the sum of the values of the selected bids with a function of the sum of the values of the selected bids of an earlier round.

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178. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 174 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds and the determining means considers whether any new bids were submitted by any user in a round.

179. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 174 wherein the determining means compares the sum of bids to an amount offered.

180. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 174 which further includes means for limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.

181. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for ~~auctioning~~ conducting an auction of a plurality of types of items among a plurality of users, a plurality of each type of item being auctioned, the method comprising:

- a) ~~transmitting from a computer~~ to users information including at least a current proposed price for each of the plurality of types of items;
- b) receiving bid related information from users ~~at a computer~~ and transmitting bid information for processing by a computer, said bid information including bids each comprising a set identification S_i where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that ~~the a~~ user proposes to transact at the current proposed prices, at least one of the bids including a set identification S_i identifying a set containing at least two different types of items;
- c) selecting bids to maximize a function of values of the selected bids based on the current proposed prices;
- d) determining at a said computer, in response to the bid information, whether the auction should continue or terminate; and
- e) transmitting a message ~~from a computer~~ to users indicating that the auction will continue in response to a determination to continue the auction, said message including an updated current proposed price for at least one of the types of items.

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182. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 181 wherein the selecting further includes constraining the selection such that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are disjoint.

183. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 182 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

184. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 181 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds and the determining includes comparing the sum of the values of the selected bids with a function of the sum of the values of the selected bids of an earlier round.

185. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 181 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds and the determining includes considering whether any new bids were submitted by any user in a round.

186. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 181 wherein the determining includes comparing the sum of bids with an amount offered.

187. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 181 which further includes limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.

188. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for ~~auctioning~~ conducting an auction of a plurality of types of items among a plurality of users, a plurality of each type of item being auctioned, the method comprising:

- a) ~~transmitting from a computer~~ to users information including at least a current proposed price for each of the plurality of types of items;
- b) receiving bid related information from at least one of said ~~users at a computer~~ and transmitting bid information for processing by a computer, said bid information including bids each comprising a set identification S_i where the set identification S_i identifies a set of items that

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the user proposes to transact at the current proposed prices, at least one of the bids including a set identification S_i identifying a set containing at least two different types of items;

c) selecting bids to maximize a function of values of the selected bids based on the current proposed prices subject to ~~the~~ a constraint that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are compatible;

d) determining at a said computer, in response to the bid information, whether the auction should continue or terminate; and

e) transmitting a message ~~from a computer~~ to users indicating that the auction will continue in response to a determination to continue the auction, said message including an updated current proposed price for at least one of the types of items.

189. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 188 wherein the selecting further includes constraining the selection such that the sets S_i identified by the selected bids are disjoint.

190. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 189 wherein the items comprise television licenses or associated derivative rights.

191. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 188 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds and the determining includes comparing the sum of the values of the selected bids with a function of the sum of the values of the selected bids of an earlier round.

192. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 188 wherein the auction is conducted in multiple rounds and the determining includes considering whether any new bids were submitted by any user in a round.

193. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 188 wherein the determining includes comparing the sum of bids with an amount offered.

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194. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 188 which further includes limiting bids from a particular user based on previous bidding activity by said particular user.